time. She has inherited a tariff structure that was deliberately altered against the interest of the consumer, while propagating that they have not done it. She has inherited the accounts that don't reflect the honest picture. Therefore, my earnest appeal to her would be to please concentrate on these core areas of railways – how does railways earn its profits by providing freight services effectively, white competing with the roadways; how does it translate that profit into passenger amenities; how do you make railways an enjoyable experience. I think, if there is some printing work, it can be outsourced. The Railways do not need to own printing presses. The Railways do not need to own hotels, after all the market will decide as to which are the costly hotels and which are the budget hotels, as far as the private sector is concerned. The world over, hospitalities are managed by the private sector. They area much better managers of hospitalities than the Railways are. The Railways ought not to get into medical colleges. If you get into medical colleges, because you have 17 hospitals, the first requirement will be that you need to have 25 acres of land contiguous to a hospital. If you don't have 25 acres of land contiguous to a hospital, the Medical Council is not allowing you a medical college, the Health Ministry will not allow it. Therefore, rather than getting into these extraneous areas, having inherited a difficult legacy, if you concentrate on the core areas of the Railways' responsibility, I am sure you will, perhaps, do much better. Thank you, Sir.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): The Railways have 14 lakh employees. We are proud of that. We have to provide some amenities also to our staff. That's why it is not the parallel organization of the Government of India. It is not at all. But we have our own institutions; we have our own hospitals. The medical colleges will be set up with their own hospitals on the land attached with them. We are not going to purchase land for that purpose. The land is available adjacent to the hospitals. So far as public-private partnership is concerned, fifty per cent will be sons and daughters of the railway employees. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please let me clarify. It is a very vital point. I listened to him very carefully. In the fifty per cent, the railway employees, their sons and daughters will get the medical opportunity and fifty per cent will be for the outsiders. Because of public-private partnership, it has to facilitate the employees, their sons and daughters. That comes in the amenities and facilities for the staff and nothing else.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, the statement by the Minister of External Affairs.

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STATEMENT BY MINISTER

First Anniversary of the Attack on Indian Embassy in Kabul on 7th July, 2008

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI S.M. KRISHNA): Mr. Deputy Chairman, 1 would like to make a statement.

Today is a year since the terrorist attack on our Embassy in Kabul in Afghanistan. A number of our Embassy personnel and a large number of Afghan nationals lost their lives in the attack on a diplomatic premise. We recall their sacrifice with a sense of grief as also to reiterate our commitment

against terrorism and all those who sponsor and sustain it. Our thoughts are also with all the families who lost their loved ones. No words of condemnation are too strong for the perpetrators and organisers of this attack. They must and will face a reckoning. Justice must be served.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU (Karnataka): Sir, I want to say something.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You just associate.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Sir, it is very important. Simply observing an anniversary is not going to serve any purpose. The Minister would have done some service to the nation. What action is taken with regard to what has happened there? That is more important, Sir. Simply making an obituary reference or recalling the incident will not serve any purpose. What is the action taken by the Government with regard to the dependants of those families who lost their lives in this incident? Will the Minister enlighten the House about the steps taken? And, then, what are the steps taken to see that such incidents do not recur in Afghanistan which is a troubled country now? ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No; it is just a *suo motu* statement on the anniversary, ...*(Interruptions)*... So, let us not ... ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: No, Sir, this is never done. ...*(Interruptions)*... This is never done. ...*(Interruptions)*... एक साल हो गया। One year is over. People want to know what is happening. ...*(Interruptions)*... It is not a political issue.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, then, we will have clarifications. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Yes, it is not a political issue. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No; we will have a clarification. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA (Jharkhand): Sir, hundreds of Indians are working there in their infrastructure development. What is the guarantee? ...*(Interruptions)*... What is the guarantee? ... *(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We will have clarifications. ...*(Interruptions)*... We will have clarifications later on. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी (बिहार) : यह जो इन्होंने स्टेटमेंट पेश की, इसकी जरूरत क्या थी? इसका purpose क्या है? ...**(व्यवधान)**... क्या purpose है, यह बताएं।

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, just tell him to give the reply. What is this? ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी: हम लोग जानना चाहते हैं कि इसका purpose क्या है? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.M. KRISHNA: My predecessor, it is who was then the Minister ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: He is assisting you. ...*(Interruptions)*...

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INUDSTRY (SHRI ANAND SHARMA): I am not assisting. With your permission, may I say that time, I was in the Government when this tragic incident happened in the Ministry of External Affairs. We had sent the same day when we got the information about this attack, in which one Brigadier who was the Defence Attache, Brigadier Mehta, and one Political Counsellor Venu, these two officers, were killed. The Secretary in the Ministry was immediately dispatched along with the senior security and intelligence officials to Afghanistan to bring the bodies back. At the same time, when they arrived, they were received by the External Affairs Minister and myself. We had taken immediate steps to give support to the families. I can say that we not only increased manifold the ex-gratia, which was to be given, but also, for the entire duration of the service of the officers concerned, as far as the IFS officer who was killed, the External Affairs Ministry had taken the special measures with the approval of the ...*(Interruptions)*... The wife is getting the salary of the officer as per the date till she will get as he would have superannuated and all other facilities which were announced at that time by the Prime Minister, including the ex gratia and the money that has been given, also a flat from the External Affairs' accommodation, the new accommodation which has come up next to the Sanskrit School, that was there. Similar steps were taken for the Defence Attache also. Even the wives ...*(Interruptions)*... I am just telling you ...*(Interruptions)*... You asked that. You asked whether we did something or not. I am just sharing that with you. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: What about engineers? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: You asked about this particular incident ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: No; Sir, there was no such convention. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: The Minister's statement is only about ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, in this House, there was no such convention to come out with a statement on the Anniversary ...*(Interruptions)*

श्री उपसभापति : क्यों issue बना रहे है इसको?

श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी : Issue तो बन गया है। ...**(व्यवधान)**...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, day before yesterday, Kargil Vijay Diwas was observed. Why was a statement not made then? How can it be ...*(Interruptions)*... When thousands of people were killed, why was there no statement about it?

SHRI ANAND SHARMA : I am only clarifying. Please don't ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: What is so great about this? ...*(Interruptions)*... Why have they not explained. ..*(Interruptions)*...

श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी : यह बताइए कि इसका मकसद क्या है? ...**(व्यवधान)**... इसको पढने का मकसद क्या है? ...**(व्यवधान)**...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: What is the sanctity of it all? Are you taking ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. V. MAITREYAN (Tamil Nadu): Will the Minister make a statement about Kargil? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: I sought to clarify only because this statement has been made. As I was aware of the details, I shared those details with the House. ...*(Interruptions)*... Please, don't politicise the issue. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is all right. Now that ...*(Interruptions)*... Please, don't raise any other issue. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: This is a statement. Please don't politicise this. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी : क्या purpose है, किसलिए यह पढ़ा जा रहा है? ...**(व्यवधान)**...

श्री उपसभापति : आप उसे छोड़िए। Please. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, so many technocrats. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: I have to say something. This is not an occasion that should be politicised. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Sir, so many technocrats, engineers and labourers being killed over there. Where is the ...*(Interruptions)*.. Why was it not mentioned? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI ANAND SHARMA: I believe that the hon. External Affairs Minister has only made a statement. It is an expression of solidarity. Since the question was asked by Mr. Venkaiah Naidu as to whether the Government had done anything, I only elaborated on it. This is a matter of record. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. The statement has been made and that issue is over. No, no. This is not ...*(Interruptions)*... The hon. Minister has made a *suo motu* statement. ...*(Interruptions)*... No, no. He said that he wished to make a statement and he has done that. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: What was the need? Nobody demanded it ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. He said that he wanted to make a statement. ...*(Interruptions)*... Let us have no argument over this.

श्री शिवानन्द तिवारी : क्यों? किसलिए? हम लोग यह जानना चाहते हैं कि किसलिए? इसका परपस क्या है? ...**(व्यवधान)**...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, Mr. Rama Chandra Khuntia. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: We are not trying to create any controversy. If the hon. Minister thought it good enough to come to the House and make a mention and recall the anniversary, he must also come to the House, prepared with all the details, and then, in the House. ...*(Interruptions)*... What has he done? Now, we have a situation where the Minister takes the help of an *erstwhile* Minister ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That is why I said if you want to seek clarifications, we shall have it some other day. Mr. Khuntia. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: When, Sir? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN (West Bengal): We wish to seek clarifications. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is customary here. You may seek clarifications. A day would be fixed later on for that.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: That is not done normally.

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[THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (PROF. P.J. JURIEN) in the Chair]

THE BUDGET (RAILWAYS) 2009-10 *(Contd.)*

SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA (Orissa): Sir, I rise to support the Railway Budget presented by Ms. Mamata Banerjee, hon. Railway Minister in the UPA Government. I would like to say that it is, in the real sense, *Aam Aadmi's* budget. As has been said, from the very beginning, in the Budget Speech itself, Madam Railway Minister has laid more emphasis on passenger amenities, cleanliness, quality of railway catering, safety and security, punctuality and many other things which are related to passenger services.

Sir, the hon. Opposition Leader had talked about economic viability and social issues. Rather he should have been happy and felt thankful to the Railway Minister because Railways is not an area where only economic viability could be considered. It has two aspects; one of them is economic viability. Before and after Independence, we had States having very long railway lines as also some States having smaller railway lines. If you consider economic viability, it may so happen that backward States, with lesser number of railway lines, may not get the same facilities as those of the bigger States. Secondly, railway lines are a monopoly transport of our country. So, if we consider only from the economic point of view, railways cannot cover the backward regions, tribal areas and areas which are not accessible and people there would not be benefiting from the railways. So, in my opinion, what the hon. Railway Minister and the UPA Government have done in taking social viability into account too is very correct.

Coming to the issue of hospitals and other aspects mentioned by him, I wish to mention here that the Railways is not the only organisation which is coming up with medical colleges and hospitals. Even the ESI Corporation with the Ministry of Labour are now going to start 26 hospitals in the whole of the country, in accordance with decision taken by the Government, the Board and with the advice